United Nations CRPD/CSP/2014/1

Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Distr.: General
1 April 2014

Original: English

Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
Seventh session
New York, 10-12 June 2014

Provisional agenda

1. Opening of the Conference of States Parties.
2. Adoption of the agenda.
3. Organization of work.
4. Election of the members of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.
5. Matters related to the implementation of the Convention:
   (a) General debate;
   (b) Round table 1: incorporating the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in the post-2015 development agenda;
   (c) Round table 2: national implementation and monitoring;
   (d) Informal panel discussion: youth with disabilities.
6. Implementation of the Convention by the United Nations system.
7. Decisions by the Conference of States Parties.
8. Closing of the meeting.

14-28673 (E) 080414

Please recycle

United Nations CRPD/CSP/2014/2

Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Distr.: General
1 April 2014

Original: English

Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
Seventh session
New York, 10-12 June 2014
Item 5 (b) of the provisional agenda*
Matters related to the implementation of the Convention: round table 1

Incorporating the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in the post-2015 development agenda

Note by the Secretariat

The present document was prepared by the Secretariat on the basis of contributions of experts received through the Bureau of the Conference of States Parties to facilitate the round table 1 discussion on the theme "Incorporating the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in the post-2015 development agenda", to be held at the seventh session of the Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

* CRPD/CSP/2014/1.

14-28685 (E) 140414

Please recycle

Introduction

1. The commitment of the international community to the advancement of the rights of persons with disabilities and their inclusion in society and development is deeply rooted in the goals of the United Nations, as enshrined in the preamble of the Charter of the United Nations, which refers to fundamental human rights, the dignity and worth of the human person and the promotion of better standards of life in larger freedom.

2. It was not, however, until the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol in 2006 that the specific barriers facing persons with disabilities in realizing their human rights were directly addressed through an international legal instrument. With the adoption of the Convention and its rapid ratification by many Member States, the international community now has in place a strong international normative framework on disability. However, a considerable implementation gap remains.

3. Persons with disabilities represent a significant portion of the world population (15 per cent)[1] and are more likely to live in poverty than persons without disabilities. Their inclusion in all development activities is therefore essential, if internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, are to be genuinely achieved. However, persons with disabilities are not represented in any of the Goals, targets and indicators.

4. This absence is of particular concern because a growing consensus of experts and researchers finds that the most pressing issue faced globally by persons with disabilities is their lack of equal access to resources such as education, employment, health care, and social and legal support systems, resulting in persons with disabilities experiencing disproportionately high rates of poverty.[2]

5. In the years since the adoption of the United Nations Millennium Declaration (General Assembly resolution 55/2), which saw the drafting and adoption of the Convention, members of the international community have increasingly recognized the urgency and importance of including persons with disabilities in the global development agenda and have reiterated their commitment to the realization of internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, for persons with disabilities.[3]

6. As the deadline for achieving the Goals approaches and discussions on a post-2015 global development agenda intensify, the international community has before it a critical opportunity to ensure the inclusion of disability in the emerging framework. To that end, in 2011, the General Assembly decided to convene a high-level meeting, at the level of Heads of State and Government, on the theme "The way forward: a disability-inclusive development agenda towards 2015 and beyond".

7. Held on 23 September 2013, the High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on the realization of the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally

---

[1] World Health Organization and World Bank, *World Report on Disability* (Geneva, 2011). Estimate based on population in 2010.

[2] *Disability and the Millennium Development Goals, A Review of the MDG Process and Strategies for Inclusion of Disability Issues in the Millennium Development Goal Efforts* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.11.IV.10).

[3] See General Assembly resolutions 63/150, 64/131, 65/186, 66/124 and 68/3.

agreed development goals for persons with disabilities provided an unprecedented opportunity to bring global attention to the situation of persons with disabilities in relation to development. During the opening session of the meeting, a concise, action-oriented document was adopted by Member States, through which they reiterated their determination to ensure the realization of the Millennium Development Goals for persons with disabilities and stressed the importance of giving due consideration to all persons with disabilities in the emerging post-2015 development agenda.

8. The outcome document of the High-level Meeting (General Assembly resolution 68/3) is rooted in the goals of the Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (articles 2 and 25), and in specific provisions of the Convention that require States parties to take steps to ensure the realization of the rights of persons with disabilities as well as other international disability-specific instruments, including the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons and the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities.

9. The outcome document explicitly recognizes the rights of persons with disabilities in the context of achieving internationally agreed development goals, by underlining the need to achieve the full application and implementation of the international normative framework on disability and development by encouraging the ratification and implementation of the Convention and by considering the ratification of its Optional Protocol, as both human rights and development instruments.

10. In stressing the importance of ensuring accessibility for and inclusion of persons with disabilities in all aspects of development, the outcome document addresses a wide range of cross-cutting issues, including the rights to education, health, social protection, employment and decent work and the needs of persons with disabilities in humanitarian response and disaster risk reduction.

11. The development aspect of the Convention provides specific guidelines for disability-inclusive action and is highly relevant to tackling the global challenges to development that the Goals and the post-2015 development agenda seek to address. For example, the Convention contains stand-alone articles dedicated to thematic issues such as situations of risk and humanitarian emergencies (article 11), education (article 24), health (article 25), work and employment (article 27), adequate standard of living and social protection (article 28), all of which are useful for the new agenda. Inclusion of the disability perspective in the emerging development framework constitutes an important tool towards implementing the Convention and addressing the current gap between legislation, policy and practice.

12. The present document outlines the way in which the Convention may be used to provide guidance to States, international organizations and civil society organizations, including organizations of persons with disabilities, in realizing the commitments included in the outcome document, most specifically towards the realization of a disability-inclusive post-2015 development framework.

13. The document also emphasizes the linkages between the outcome document and the provisions of the Convention in respect of international cooperation. With the inclusion of article 32, on international cooperation, the Convention has become the first human rights treaty to include specific provisions requiring States to

undertake effective measures to foster international cooperation in the realization of the rights of persons with disabilities, including, for example, cooperation between developed and developing countries. Such measures could include not only north-south but also north-north and south-south cooperation.

14. The document also reviews the ongoing post-2015 discussion to promote equality, which provides an entry point for the inclusion of a disability perspective in the emerging international development framework.

The Convention as a tool to promote inclusive, equitable and sustainable development

15. The Convention recognizes that international cooperation plays an important role in the promotion and protection of the rights of persons with disabilities (see A/HRC/16/38). A number of its provisions provide useful guidance for the implementation of the commitments undertaken by Member States in respect of the outcome document.

16. In the preamble of the Convention, for example, States parties highlight the fact that the majority of persons with disabilities live in conditions of poverty (para. (t)) and recognize the importance of international cooperation for improving the living conditions of persons with disabilities in every country, particularly in developing countries (para. (l)).

17. Also in the preamble, States parties recognize the importance of the principles and policy guidelines contained in the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons and the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities in influencing the promotion, formulation and evaluation of, inter alia, programmes and actions at the national, regional and international levels to further equalize opportunities for persons with disabilities (para. (f)). They also emphasize the importance of mainstreaming disability issues as an integral part of relevant strategies of sustainable development (para. (g)).

18. Under article 4 of the Convention, States parties are required to take into account the protection and promotion of the human rights of persons with disabilities in all policies and programmes (para. 1 (c)) and, with regard to economic, social and cultural rights, to undertake to take measures to the maximum of their available resources and, where needed, within the framework of international cooperation, with a view to achieving progressively the full realization of those rights, without prejudice to those obligations contained in the Convention that are immediately applicable according to international law (para. 2).

19. The Convention also includes a stand-alone article on international cooperation (article 32), which sets out modalities most relevant to international cooperation to support the realization of disability rights. These include (a) inclusive and accessible international cooperation; (b) capacity-building; (c) cooperation in research and access to scientific and technical knowledge; and (d) technical and economic assistance, including through technological transfer (see A/HRC/16/38).

20. The provisions provide a solid ground — and indeed a legal commitment — for promoting a global development agenda beyond 2015 that is accessible to and inclusive of persons with disabilities, and is respectful of their human rights.

Inclusion of persons with disabilities in the post-2015 process

21. There is also growing recognition that the inclusion of disability is necessary not only for the benefit of persons with disabilities but also for the actual achievement of development goals.

22. Initiatives taken towards the development of the post-2015 development framework have provided some cause for optimism. For example, in its report entitled "A new global partnership: eradicate poverty and transform economies through sustainable development", the High-level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda addresses disability in a number of critical ways, including as a crosscutting development issue and in relation to human rights, participation and monitoring.

23. A promising entry point for the inclusion of a disability perspective in the post-2015 development agenda stems from the ongoing discussion on inequalities, featured in the global consultations facilitated by the United Nations Development Group and intergovernmental processes convened by the General Assembly, including the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals and the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development The discussions have shed light on several major ways in which inequalities have hindered progress towards the Millennium Development Goals, in some cases even widening gaps between different groups within a given society, and provide important lessons for the new agenda. With growing socioeconomic inequalities faced by particular social groups, including persons with disabilities, it is essential that the post-2015 development agenda be underpinned by human rights standards and principles, including of equality and non-discrimination.[4] The post-2015 development agenda should take a human rights-based approach in line with the Convention and be supported by social policy frameworks, addressing both the causes and effects of poverty and inequality.

24. The explicit inclusion of persons with disabilities in the post-2015 development agenda could take a number of different forms. One way would be to include a stand-alone goal on disability, with its own set of targets and indicators. This would be similar to Goal 4, on promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women. Discussions so far have included, for example, a proposal for the adoption of an inclusive education goal with adequate targets and indicators in the post-2015 development agenda, as recommended in the 2013 report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the rights of persons with disabilities (A/HRC/25/29 and Corr.1).

25. Another approach could be to propose an independent list of indicators for persons with disabilities that can be used following a standard list of themes (for example, education, health, work and employment). Such an independent set of indicators has already been proposed for gender, ageing, youth and migrants, according to the 2013 report of the United Nations System Task Team on the Post-2015 United Nations Development Agenda, entitled "Statistics and indicators for the post-2015 development agenda". A third option would be to look at inequality across each theme, for example, child mortality according to income quintiles. This last option does not have the advantage of the indicator being tailored to address the specific needs of persons with disabilities. However, if data

[4] Technical Support Team, issues brief on promoting equality, including social equality.

disaggregated by disability, sex and age is made available, it will still be useful for the process of gathering information on how inequality can be reduced within population groups to reach the overall target.

26. There are encouraging signs of the willingness to strengthen the focus on disability statistics in the new development agenda. In its report, the United Nations System Task Team noted the need for systematic statistics on persons with disabilities among other population groups to support the principles of non-discrimination and equality. In its report, the High-level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda also underlined the need for accurate data, calling for a "data revolution" and stipulating that data gathered should be disaggregated by disability, gender and other categories to ensure that no one was left behind. Sustained efforts will be required to build upon such developments and to bring about a disability-inclusive post-2015 framework.

The way forward

27. As the international community moves towards the formulation of new sustainable and post-2015 development goals, the options below may be considered for promoting disability-inclusive development:

- **Improve disability data collection, analysis, monitoring and evaluation for policy development and programming**. Disaggregated data will help to measure the gap between persons with disabilities and the rest of the population, and can contribute to the formulation of appropriate targets to ensure the inclusion of those left behind (for example, in health, education, employment and income outcomes).

- **Progressively remove barriers to and promote the realization of accessibility as part of the general system of society**. Disability-inclusive development integrating the concept of universal design and accessibility for all not only benefits persons with disabilities but all members of society (including, for example, ageing populations, those accompanied by children and travellers with luggage), promoting future development that is inclusive and sustainable.

- **Further strengthen international, regional and subregional cooperation and partnerships for a disability-inclusive post-2015 development agenda**. An increase in the mobilization of public and private resources and the exchange of good practices, including utilizing the multiple modalities of regional and subregional cooperation, such as North-South cooperation, South-South and triangular cooperation, are encouraged as means to achieve this objective.

- **Ensure that persons with disabilities and their representative organizations are given the opportunity to participate meaningfully in all development processes, in full respect of articles 3 (c) and 4 (3) of the Convention**. Support, including capacity-development, should be provided for persons with disabilities and their organizations in order to facilitate such participation.

28. The following questions are set out for the consideration of the participants at round table 1:

(a) What specific entry points exist, at this stage, for including disability in the post-2015 development agenda?

(b) It is often observed that the simplicity of the Millennium Development Goals (8 goals, 18 targets, 48 indicators) contributed to their success. How can a new framework best address inequalities, including specifically those faced by persons with disabilities, in relation to all relevant emerging goals (for example, relating to poverty reduction/eradication, health and education), without over-complicating the new framework?

(c) How can the inclusion of disability in the post-2015 development agenda be monitored and evaluated?

United Nations CRPD/CSP/2014/3

Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Distr.: General
1 April 2014

Original: English

Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
Seventh session
New York, 10-12 June 2014
Item 5 (c) of the provisional agenda*
Matters related to the implementation of the Convention: round table 2

National implementation and monitoring

Note by the Secretariat

The present document was prepared by the Secretariat on the basis of contributions[1] of experts received through the Bureau of the Conference of States Parties to facilitate the discussion of round table 2 on the theme "National implementation and monitoring", to be held at the seventh session of the Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

* "CRPD/CSP/2014/1."

[1] Contributions were also received from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, including information contained in its thematic study on the structure and role of national mechanisms for the implementation and monitoring of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (A/HRC/13/29).

14-28659 (E) 210414

Please recycle

Introduction

1. In accordance with article 4 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, States parties undertake to ensure and promote the full realization of all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all persons with disabilities without discrimination of any kind. To that end, States parties are required to adopt all appropri egislative, administrative and other measures for the implementation of the Convention. In all human rights treaties, the implementation obligation is closely linked to a monitoring component. The monitoring of human rights treaties is needed to assess not only whether measures to implement the treaty are adopted and applied but also to evaluate their results and therefore provide feedback for implementation. Monitoring mechanisms foster accountability and, over the long term, strengthen the capacity of contracting parties to treaties to fulfil their commitments and obligations.

2. The Convention provides for monitoring of its implementation both at the international and national levels. The present document focuses on national implementation and monitoring and provides an in-depth review of the Convention's relevant provisions in that regard.

Implementation at the national level

3. In accordance with article 33 of the Convention, States parties are required to put in place structures for the implementation and monitoring of the Convention at the national level. The inclusion of a norm detailing national implementation and monitoring structures and their functions at the national level is unprecedented in a human rights treaty.[2]

4. The emphasis in article 33, paragraph 1, is on domestic implementation, with the responsibility placed with Governments. In order to avoid uncoordinated action or the blurring of that responsibility across government sectors, States are required to designate one or more focal points within government for matters relating to the implementation of the Convention and to consider the establishment of a coordination mechanism.

5. In accordance with article 33, paragraph 2, States parties are required to maintain, strengthen, designate or establish a framework, including an independent entity, to protect, promote and monitor the implementation of the Convention. The mechanism must function on the basis of the principles relating to the status and functioning of national institutions for the protection and promotion of human rights (known as the Paris Principles) (see General Assembly resolution 48/134, annex).

6. In accordance with article 33, paragraph 3, civil society, and persons with disabilities and their respective organizations in particular, is required, to be involved and to participate fully in the monitoring process, in line with the principle

[2] The partial exception to this is the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, which requires States parties to set up a national preventive mechanism. Further information on the Optional Protocol is available from the website of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human rights at www.ohchr.org/EN/Pages/WelcomePage.aspx.

relating to the participation of persons with disabilities, which permeates the Convention.

7. The incorporation of provisions on national implementation and monitoring in the Convention has been commended as a measure to consolidate the institutional preconditions necessary to ensuring its realization at the domestic level.[3]

Focal point(s)

8. The Convention does not prescribe either the form or the specific function of the focal point(s). In some cases, States parties may already have in place relevant bodies or mechanisms at the time of ratification or access to the Convention. In such cases, existing mandates and resource allocation will need to be revised to include overseeing the implementation of the Convention and to coordinate efforts among various sectors at the local, regional and national/federal levels.

9. Although different systems of government may favour different forms or structures for their focal points, some key general considerations may be taken into account.

10. For the effective implementation of the Convention, a two-pronged approach may be considered, with the designation of an overall focal point, as well as focal points serving at the level of each or most government departments/ministries. Such an approach encourages the mainstreaming of the monitoring responsibility across government sectors in recognition that the full and effective implementation of the Convention requires action by most, if not all, government ministries. The mandate of the ministry focal points should include promoting awareness of the Convention within the ministry, participation in the development of an action plan on the Convention and monitoring and reporting on its implementation within functional lines.

11. At the same time, the appointment of one overall focal point would respond to the need to ensure general coordination, oversight and promotion in respect of implementation. In setting out the responsibilities of the central focal point, the following considerations may be of relevance:

(a) The Convention endorses and represents a paradigm shift in the understanding of disability, from approaches that have a medical and charity-based focus to approaches that are based on human rights and have a social dimension.[4] The shift should be reflected in the choice of the government focal point(s), with preference given to ministries responsible for human rights, social affairs and justice. Designation of the ministries of health or of welfare and labour as the government focal point should be avoided, as should the designation of special education departments within ministries of education;

(b) Implementation of the Convention requires support at the most senior level of government, and focal points should, accordingly, be located at the highest

[3] See G. Quinn, "Resisting the 'temptation of elegance': can the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities socialize States to right behaviour?", in *The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: European and Scandinavian Perspectives*, O.M. Arnardóttir and G. Quinn, eds. (Leiden, Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 2009).

[4] In paragraph 1(e) of the preamble, the Convention recognizes that disability is an evolving concept and results from the interaction between persons with impairments and attitudinal and environmental barriers that hinders their full and effective participation in society.

possible level, such as in the Office of the President or of the Prime Minister, or within the Cabinet. Not having ministers in charge of disability as part of the Cabinet might hamper the robustness of the focal point structure;

(c) The mandate of the focal point should clearly focus on developing and coordinating a coherent national policy on the Convention. As such, the focal point should promote, guide, inform and advise the Government on matters related to the implementation of the Convention. The mandate of the focal point could also include the coordination of government action on the Convention in relation to reporting, monitoring, awareness-raising and liaising with the independent monitoring framework designated under article 33, paragraph 2. Furthermore, the focal point should be well placed to facilitate a channel of communication between civil society and organizations of persons with disabilities and the Government on matters related to implementation;

(d) The focal point should be adequately supported in terms of technical staff and resources. Therefore, identifying a support structure for the focal point within a large ministry, so as to take advantage of economies of scale, may be helpful. In such cases, it may be useful to explicitly recognize the independence of the focal point structure from the parent ministry.

12. Article 33, paragraph 1, should be considered not only in respect of addressing the issue of functional focal points in concerned ministries but also in respect of its relevance to multiple levels of government, so that disability focal points may be designated at the local, regional and national/federal levels.

Coordination mechanisms

13. Under article 33, paragraph 1, States parties are requested to give due consideration to the establishment or designation of a coordination mechanism within government to facilitate related actions and processes in different sectors and at different levels.

14. Several States have coordination mechanisms on disability issues in place, in some cases predating the ratification of the Convention. Although arrangements differ, coordinating committees often include representatives from various ministries and organizations of persons with disabilities as well as other civil society organizations, the private sector and trade unions. Their mandates often focus on policy development, the promotion of dialogue in the disability field, awareness-raising and similar functions. Coordination committees often have a secretariat, in several cases housed within ministries of social welfare.

15. The effectiveness of existing coordination mechanisms is often considered to be low by organizations of persons with disabilities (see A/HRC/13/29). Frequently cited obstacles to their success include the lack of a clear legal mandate, a lack of resources, the limited involvement of persons with disabilities or the exclusion of persons with certain types of disabilities. Furthermore, laws establishing coordinating structures, including, in some cases, coordinating frameworks established by States upon ratification of the Convention, have often not been operationalized through the adoption of rules and regulations, with the result that such structures are in reality not operational or functioning.

16. In instances where more than one focal point is appointed, it would seem appropriate that such focal points participate in the coordination mechanism. The

mechanism may be chaired by the focal point tasked with the central responsibility of implementing the Convention. Through participation in the mechanism, government agencies will be able to focus their activities and policy development on areas where they have an added value; avoid duplication; and make the best use of limited resources.

Monitoring framework

17. In accordance with article 33, paragraph 2, States are required to maintain, strengthen, designate or establish at the national level a framework that includes one or more independent mechanisms, to promote, protect and monitor implementation of the Convention. The Convention specifies that when designating or establishing the independent mechanism(s) to be included in the framework, States parties are to take into account the Paris Principles.

18. Article 33 does not prescribe a specific organizational form for the national monitoring framework, and States parties are free to determine the appropriate structure according to their political and organizational context. Suitable entities are already in place in some States. In others, the implementation of article 33, paragraph 2, requires the establishment of a new entity or the transformation of existing entities.

19. The experience of States parties that have taken formal steps towards the implementation of the monitoring framework shows that some of them have assigned the function to a single-entity framework, while others have assigned the task to multiple entities. Whatever the organizational structure, three key requirements need to be given effect in the monitoring framework:

(a) The framework must include one or more independent mechanisms that take into account the Paris Principles. This does not mean that only entities complying with the Paris Principles should be part of the framework; rather, it means that at least one mechanism that is established and functions on the basis of the Paris Principles must be included;

(b) The framework must be capable of adequately promoting, protecting and monitoring the implementation of the Convention. This means that the framework needs to be given an adequate mandate and the institutional capacity required to effectively perform its functions;

(c) Civil society, and persons with disabilities and their representative organizations in particular, need to be involved and fully participate in the monitoring process.

The independent mechanism and the Paris Principles

20. The Paris Principles identify four main characteristics that should apply to the independent mechanisms under article 33 and that should be considered to apply to the overall framework:

(a) **Competence and responsibilities**. National human rights institutions and, in the context of article 33, the independent mechanism established under the Convention, should be given as broad a mandate as possible, clearly set forth in a constitutional or legislative text. Responsibilities should include reporting to the Government on human rights matters; harmonizing national legislation, regulations

and practices with international human rights standards; encouraging the ratification of international human rights instruments; contributing to the reports that States are required to submit to United Nations bodies and committees; cooperating with international, regional and other national human rights institutions; assisting in human rights education; and publicizing and promoting human rights;

(b) **Composition, independence and pluralism**. Independence is guaranteed through composition, which should ensure the pluralist representation of social forces in the country; sufficient funding and infrastructure, not to be subject to financial control by government; and appointment of the members of a national institution by the official act that establishes the mandate;

(c) **Methods of operation**. The Principles require that a national human rights institution and the independent framework in article 33 of the Convention should freely consider any questions falling within their competence from whatever source they see fit. The Principles also stipulate that national institutions should maintain consultations with the other bodies responsible for human rights issues and with non-governmental organizations;

(d) **Status of institutions with quasi-jurisdictional competence**. Such institutions are authorized to hear and consider complaints and petitions. In the exercise of those functions, the institutions may seek conciliation or issue binding decisions, hear any complaints or petitions or transmit them, inform the party of available remedies and promote access to them.

21. In a 2009 thematic study on national mechanisms for monitoring the Convention, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights found that some of the entities considered by States in the context of the establishment of the monitoring framework did not meet the above-mentioned criteria for designation as independent mechanisms. Insufficient guarantees of independence, for example, would disqualify Government commissions and some of the national observatories on disabilities that had been established in some countries. Similar concerns have been raised in respect of national disability secretariats that have included government representatives on their executive boards and in national disability councils. Non-governmental organizations, by definition, have generally enjoyed great structural independence from executive government. However, the degree of independence of a non-governmental organization in reality can vary, and generally is not legally guaranteed.

22. The Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities has recommended, in its concluding observations to States parties, to adopt measures to set up independent monitoring mechanisms that are fully in compliance with the Paris Principles; to provide adequate staffing and budget resources to those mechanisms; and to allow them to administer that budget autonomously.

Role of national human rights institutions

23. Existing national human rights institutions have the potential to be designated as independent mechanisms performing the functions covered under article 33, paragraph 2; in fact, it has been said that national human rights institutions play a significant role with respect to the tasks set out under the article. Notwithstanding existing differences, the majority of existing national human rights institutions can

be grouped together in three broad categories: human rights commissions, ombudsmen and institutes.

24. The Convention is the first human rights convention to include an explicit role for national human rights institutions in promoting, protecting and monitoring the implementation of a treaty at the national level. Treaty bodies monitoring other human rights conventions have, however, often interpreted the general obligation to adopt all measures necessary to give effect to the treaty to include the establishment of a national human rights institution. In particular, the Committee on the Rights of the Child in general comment No. 2, on the role of independent national human rights institutions in the promotion and protection of the rights of the child, has clarified that it considers the establishment of such bodies to fall within the commitment made by States parties upon ratification to ensure the implementation of the Convention and that the role of national human rights institutions is to monitor independently the State's compliance and progress towards implementation of the Convention and to do all it can to ensure full respect for children's rights.

25. In fact, several national human rights institutions have long-established records of engagement on the theme of disability rights, which derive from their broad human rights mandate and often precede the ratification of the Convention in their respective countries.

26. Notwithstanding such wide engagement of national human rights institutions in the rights of persons with disabilities, few States have taken formal steps to designate their national human rights institutions as the independent mechanism of the framework.

27. The process of formally designating a national human rights institution can reflect the adequacy of the mandate of the institution for the purpose of article 33, which, in some cases, might reveal opportunities for strengthening compliance with the Paris Principles.

28. In other cases, a review of how persons with disabilities participate in existing national human rights institutions can highlight the need to revise the composition of the institution and strengthen pluralism.

29. It should also be noted that the designation of a national human rights institution as the independent mechanism will most likely require internal structural changes and that additional financial and human resources will almost always be required.

30. Where no entities exist at the national level in line with the Paris Principles, consideration should be given to establishing such an institution.

Mechanisms for national monitoring

31. Article 33, paragraph 2, also foresees the possibility that more than one independent mechanism might be appointed in the framework, as appropriate, with the effect that States would in fact establish a "mechanism of mechanisms" to promote, protect and monitor implementation.

32. This possibility seems to address States parties with multiple levels of government, such as federal States and analogous entities.

33. Based on the particular constitutional structure and other political and geographic considerations in a State, the independent mechanism of a federal State could arguably be either a unified federal body or a system with multiple bodies. Designation could come from either the federal Government and/or a devolved administration within the limits of its territorial jurisdiction and competence. In all cases, it should be remembered that ultimate responsibility for the implementation of the treaty lies at the State party level.

34. Article 33, paragraph 2, appears also to allow States to designate multiple mechanisms by thematic divisions of responsibility so that, conceivably, a plurality of such mechanisms might be engaged depending on the function to be performed.

Mechanisms for protecting and promoting rights and monitoring implementation

35. Promotion of the implementation of the Convention covers a broad range of activities, including not only awareness-raising activities, as highlighted in article 8 of the Convention, but also a more strategic engagement to advance implementation. This could include scrutiny for compliance of existing national legislation, regulations and practices, draft bills and other proposals, in order to ensure consistency with the requirements of the Convention; and the provision of technical advice to public authorities or other agencies in construing and applying the Convention, including on the basis of observations and recommendations and general comments issued by the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

36. The Conference of States Parties is a mechanism, established in accordance with article 40 of the Convention, to consider any matter with regard to the implementation of the Convention. Since its establishment in 2008, the Conference of States Parties has gradually developed into an important venue and forum to promote the implementation of the Convention, especially through the exchange of experience and good practices among States parties, the agencies of the United Nations system and civil society stakeholders. There still exists a need and opportunity to further strengthen the Conference of States Parties as a mechanism and to explore its great potential to promote implementation.

37. Protection under the Convention can include a broad range of different activities, including the investigation and examination of individual and group complaints, taking cases to court, conducting inquiries and issuing reports.

38. Monitoring the implementation of the Convention can be approached in a number of ways, including through the assessment of progress, stagnation or retrogression in the enjoyment of rights over a certain period of time. The development of indicators and benchmarks is a particularly effective way to monitor implementation, particularly with regard to the progressive realization of economic, social and cultural rights, as set out in the Convention.

39. Another approach with which many human rights institutions are familiar is that of monitoring human rights violations, a common methodology of which to collect or maintain records of the complaints filed by alleged victims before relevant judicial or quasi-judicial complaints mechanisms. Considering the specific barriers persons with disabilities have traditionally faced in accessing justice, such data can be integrated with information on violations provided by other sources, such as civil

society organizations and organizations of persons with disabilities participating in the framework.

Participation of civil society

40. Article 33, paragraph 3, requires the involvement and full participation of civil society, in particular of persons with disabilities and their representative organizations in the monitoring process. That requirement is consistent with the general principle concerning the participation of persons with disabilities, as set out in the article 3 and article 4, paragraph 3, which refer to close consultation with and the active involvement of persons with disabilities through their representative organizations in the development and implementation of legislation and policies to implement the Convention and in all decision-making processes relating to persons with disabilities.

41. The requirement to involve persons with disabilities applies to all parts of article 33 and not only to the monitoring process. In that sense, any consultation on the establishment of the monitoring framework should naturally involve representative organizations of persons with disabilities.

42. Article 33, paragraph 3, seems to refer to both the direct participation of persons with disabilities in the monitoring process and their indirect participation, through representative organizations. The direct participation of persons with disabilities in the monitoring process can occur, for example, by having experts who are persons with disabilities participate in the work of the monitoring framework. Some national human rights institutions include commissioners who are persons with disabilities or include persons with disabilities on their executive boards.

43. At the same time, it is important to consider the requirement that organizations representing persons with disabilities should be included in the monitoring process. It is advisable that an open discussion to be held with organizations of persons with disabilities in order to identify the criteria on which organizations can be considered to be representative of such constituencies. In many cases, there may be a preference for national umbrella organizations.

44. The potential to have national human rights institutions serve as independent mechanisms and organizations of persons with disabilities as participating entities of the monitoring framework should be explored.

Key questions for consideration

45. The following questions may be considered as a reference in the discussion of round table 2 on this issue:

(a) What measures have States parties adopted in order to ensure that government agencies responsible for the implementation of the Convention are provided with effective institutional arrangements and resources that include a focal point system and a coordination structure?

(b) What measures have been adopted by States parties to secure a broad mandate, independence, pluralistic composition and adequate resources for an effective monitoring framework?

(c) What measures are envisaged or have already been taken to establish or strengthen entities that are compliant with the Paris Principles, for the purposes set out in paragraph 2 of article 33 of the Convention?

(d) What measures have or should be taken to ensure that persons with disabilities and their representative organizations take part in monitoring processes, as well as in any other decision-making processes that concerns them?

(e) How can the Conference of States parties be strengthened further as a mechanism and how can its potential in promoting the implementation of the Convention be explored?

United Nations CRPD/CSP/2014/4

Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Distr.: General
1 April 2014

Original: English

Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
Seventh session
New York, 10-12 June 2014
Item 5 (d) of the provisional agenda*
Matters related to the implementation of the Convention: informal panel discussion

Youth with disabilities

Note by the Secretariat

The present document was prepared by the Secretariat on the basis of contributions[1] of experts, received through the Bureau of the Conference of States Parties, to facilitate the informal panel discussion on the theme "Youth with disabilities", to be held during the seventh session of the Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

* CRPD/CSP/2014/1.

[1] Contributions to the present document were also received from the Leonard Cheshire Disability and Inclusive Development Centre at University College London, as well as from the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

14-28679 (E) 150414

Please recycle

Youth with disabilities

Introduction

1. No global data exists on the number of youth[2] with disabilities. However, estimates suggest that they constitute a significant group, with between 180 and 220 million youth with disabilities worldwide, nearly 80 per cent of whom live in developing countries, according to the fact sheet on youth with disabilities produced by the United Nations for the International Year of Youth.

2. With half the world's population below the age of 15, the number of youth with disabilities can be expected to rise markedly over the coming decades, particularly in low- and middle-income countries. Better options for medical intervention now allow a growing number of infants and children with disabilities to survive into adolescence. Improved access to treatment for accident or illness also allows many seriously ill or gravely injured children and youth to survive with disabilities. The members of military forces are disproportionately young and many receive disabling injuries. Many chronic disabling illnesses and mental health conditions first appear during adolescence. The sensory, physical and mental health impairments associated with HIV/AIDS will add millions of young people to the growing ranks of those who have disabilities and, according to the United Nations Children's Fund in its report *The State of the World's Children 2013: Children with Disabilities*, the lack of adequate reproductive health information places youth with pre-existing disabilities at increased risk of becoming HIV-positive.

3. While the issues faced by youth with disabilities were, in the past, defined in terms of medical concerns, it is now clearly recognized that disability is a cross-cutting issue and that its impact on social, economic and other human rights issues poses the key barriers in the lives of such young people.

4. There has been little empirical research on youth with disabilities as a distinct group in low- and middle-income countries and existing information from higher income countries focuses largely on formal educational or health-care systems and transition to work programmes. More attention needs to be focused on the wide array of issues faced by young people with disabilities.

5. Youth with disabilities are often overlooked in programme planning. Mainstream development programmes for youth rarely include young men and women with disabilities. Programmes for people with disabilities, where they exist, are seldom inclusive, concentrating either on children with disabilities in schools, or families, or on employment and social integration of adults with disabilities. Few address the unique social, psychological, educational and economic needs of youth.

6. The needs of youth with disabilities are strikingly similar to those of their peers without disabilities and relate to education, job training, employment and inclusion in the social, cultural, religious and economic lives of their families and communities. What distinguishes youth with disabilities are not their common needs, but the fact that these needs continue to go so largely unmet.

---

[2] The United Nations defines "youth" as young people between the ages of 15 and 24. While the needs and concerns of a boy with a disability aged 15 may be very different than for a young woman with a disability aged 23, the document concentrates on the large number of issues and concerns they share.

International normative framework

7. The rights of youth with disabilities are guaranteed by the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, adopted in 2006 and now ratified by over 140 countries, which ensures that persons with disabilities of all ages, including youth with disabilities, are entitled to all rights, including education, health care, employment, the right to vote, the right to a family life and to participate fully in the societies in which they live. The human rights of youth with disabilities are also established by a number of other instruments such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. A host of regional, national and local legislation and policies that pertain to the inclusion of persons with disabilities have also been instituted in recent years, often in conjunction with national ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

8. Even in these documents however, the specific needs and concerns of youth with disabilities, as a distinct and vulnerable group, are assumed but rarely mentioned. For instance, the landmark World Programme of Action on Youth, of 2010, though applicable to youth with disabilities, includes just a few specific references to youth with disabilities, only in the context of employment and information technology.

Issues and challenges

Stigma

9. Globally, one of the greatest impediments to youth with disabilities is stigma, which leads to social isolation and discrimination. Societal discrimination and negative attitudes arise from misconceptions, stereotypes and folklore which links disability to punishment for past sins, misfortune or witchcraft. Community members (family members, neighbours, community leaders, teachers, health-care workers and others) who hold such views may distance themselves from children and adults with disabilities and their families and limit or prohibit their participation in community life. Families of children and youth with disabilities may respond by keeping them hidden at home or sending them to institutions, where these exist, both in response to such prejudices and in an attempt to protect their children. Understanding and addressing stigma is a critical step to improving the lives of all persons with disabilities.

Poverty

10. While any family can have a child with a disability, disability disproportionately affects the poor. The lack of medical care, nutritious food, basic water and sanitation, adequate housing and safe neighbourhoods increases the risk that a child in a poor family will be born or become impaired.[3] Families with a child with disabilities are more likely to face poverty, not only through additional

[3] Nora Groce, Maria Kett, Raymond Lang and Jean-François Trani, "Disability and Poverty: the need for a more nuanced understanding of implications for development policy and practice" *Third World Quarterly*, vol. 32, No. 8 (September 2011).

demands on household income for medical care and disability-related expenses, but also because parents and family members may take on caregiving roles, which generally means that one parent or family member (generally female) may give up income-generating activities in order to stay home and provide support. The result is that households with members with disabilities generally have lower incomes than other households and are more likely to live below the poverty line.

Health care

11. Access to health care is important for all young people and this is no less true for youth with disabilities. For these young people, there are two areas of concern: lack of access to general health care and for some, lack of access to disability-specific care (for example, rehabilitative services and assistive devices such as wheelchairs or hearing aids).

12. General health care is a problem because in many cases, health-care facilities are simply inaccessible. For example, stairs block access for wheelchair users, or there are no sign language interpreters. Health-care workers are often unfamiliar with the needs of persons with disabilities and hesitate to take on routine care, mistakenly believing that specialist care is always needed.

13. Public health education programmes often are not designed to include youth with disabilities: radio campaigns are inaccessible to deaf individuals; witty, fast-paced advertisements for safer sex are lost on some young people with intellectual disabilities. This is a lost opportunity, particularly when a growing body of research, including studies based on the National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 (United States of America) and the World Bank/Yale University global survey on HIV/AIDS and disability, clearly shows that youth with disabilities are at equal or greater risk for smoking, alcohol consumption and unsafe sex.

14. Rehabilitative services are limited or non-existent in many countries and, where they exist, tend to be concentrated in urban areas and to be prohibitively expensive. In societies where young women are not allowed to travel or live away from home unaccompanied, accessing such services is not permitted unless they are accompanied by a male relative.

15. Assistive devices (such as artificial limbs, wheelchairs, hearing aids or glasses) are often unavailable, or may be expensive. The latter is particularly problematic for adolescents, who may require regular replacements as they grow. The issue is not simply cosmetic. A poorly fitting artificial limb has profound psychological and social implications for an already marginalized young person. A wheelchair that has become too small limits the ability of a young person to leave the house to attend school, work or establish any measure of autonomy.

Education

16. Lack of education is a key concern for most youth with disabilities. Despite clear calls for universal education in the Millennium Development Goals and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and for education for children and youth with disabilities in the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education, adopted at the World Conference on Special Needs Education: Access and Quality, youth with disabilities continue to attend school at rates far lower than their non-disabled peers, they are more likely to drop out of school and

even those who complete their courses often learn far less than their classmates because of a lack of resources, teachers who are untrained in how best to educate children with disabilities and as a result of low expectations.

17. Awareness-raising and capacity-building programmes for teachers to prepare them to adequately teach children and adolescents with disabilities are rare. Physical barriers also remain. If the schools, their facilities and related services such as transportation are not designed and built in an manner accessible to all service users and learners with different needs and functional situations, many youth and children with disabilities will continue to be unable to attend. A lack of trained teachers or appropriate teaching materials or methods limits access to education for millions children and youth with disabilities, as well as those with mental health difficulties.

18. For many youth with disabilities, the cumulative lack of adequate primary education results in poor performance on standardized exams, which blocks their ability to go on to higher education. By the time children with a disability reach early adolescence, the vast majority find themselves far behind the educational and skill levels of their non-disabled peers.

19. Apprenticeships and job training are additional areas of concern. Unlike non-disabled youth, youth with disabilities find it particularly hard to get apprenticeships or job training that would enable them to enter the workplace. Should they not succeed in an initial apprenticeship or be fired from their first job, those around them are quick to label them unemployable and refuse to let them try again.

Employment and economic livelihood

20. Young people worldwide are at higher risk for unemployment, partial employment or full employment at lower wages than adult workers. Adolescents and youth with disabilities are at even greater risk. Entering the job market with little education and few or no skills, youth with disabilities have difficulty competing. For most, social prejudice and a lack of accurate information on the potential productivity of persons with disabilities makes employers hesitant to hire them. For some, specific physical or intellectual impairments may further limit their job options.

21. The employment rates of youth with disabilities are rarely tracked. However, rates of unemployment among adults with disabilities, on average, tend to be some 40 to 60 per cent higher than for the non-disabled population. As noted in the fact sheet on youth with disabilities, the International Labour Organization estimates that the unemployment rate among people with disabilities in the developing world is as high as 80 per cent in some countries.

22. Not only is their employment status in a continual state of flux, but young people with disabilities are also more likely to be hired for jobs that require little training and have few opportunities for advancement. As reported in a fact sheet on children and young people with disabilities, prepared by the United Nations Children's Fund in 2013, even when well educated, young people with disabilities take longer to find a position, have less job security and less prospect of advancement than do their peers without disabilities. This is true even for individuals with a disability who have received a university education.

23. Citing employment figures only however, may be misleading. Presumably, only those whose disabilities are very severe or who are from wealthy families do not contribute to their households in some way. Millions of young people with disabilities worldwide work, although they are officially classified as "unemployed". Millions work in the family home, farm or workshop. Millions more work doing odd jobs in the community or working as beggars.[4] Such work, even when of great financial significance to the household, may go unnoticed by economists, local communities and even by their own families.

Social inclusion and participation

24. The years between the ages of 15 and 24 are developmentally critical for young people, as this is the period when most begin to establish their own identities and autonomy, establishing relationships while moving from their parents' home and setting up households and families of their own. Yet many youth with disabilities are not included in activities that build fundamental social, educational and economic skills. This exclusion distinguishes young people with a disability from all other groups of young people in every society.

25. Young people with a disability often have little or no say over where they will live, whom they will live with and what role they will play within their families or communities. They are often denied the right to marry or to build families of their own. Indeed, in some countries, individuals with certain types of disability are unable to legally obtain a marriage licence.

26. This does not mean that young men and women with a disability are not involved in relationships, or do not engage in sexual activities, but it often means that there is no social acknowledgement for such activities and furthermore, that no information on relationships or sex education is provided to them, as reported by the World Health Organization and the United Nations Population Fund in their guidance note on promoting sexual and reproductive health for persons with disabilities. This places adolescent girls and young women with disabilities at increased risk for pregnancy, and young men and women with disabilities at increased risk for abusive relationships and sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS.

27. Social participation and civic engagement is also often limited or denied to youth with disabilities. Civic groups, community associations or political activities are rarely designed to be accessible to youth with a disability. Without inclusion in the social and civic life of their communities, young women and men with disabilities often lack a voice or a vote in how their communities are run or in decisions that will affect them and their families in future.

Other cross-sectoral issues

28. Disability does not exist in isolation, but must be considered in conjunction with other pressing development issues. Young people with a disability who are members of ethnic and minority populations and those who live in rural areas or urban slums also face multiple disadvantages. These young people are less likely to

[4] Nora Groce, Barbara Murray, Marie Loeb, Carlo Tramontano, Jean-François Trani and Asfaw Mekonnen, "Disabled Beggars in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia", Employment Working Paper, No. 141 (Geneva, International Labour Organization, 2013).

be included in whatever mainstream or disability-specific services and programmes exist for youth, compounding the marginalization and discrimination already encountered. Young women with disabilities in such populations are at even greater disadvantage.

29. Violence and abuse is another area of great concern. Youth with disabilities are at significantly increased risk of violence and abuse. Not only have many young people been initially disabled through violence, but once disabled, these individuals are at significantly increased risk of being victims of physical and psychological abuse, domestic violence and rape. They are also at increased risk of being trafficked into sexual slavery. Youth with disabilities are at increased risk because they are often unable to protect themselves and because many abusers believe that such young people will be unable to report the abuse or will not be believed should such abuse be reported.

30. The social isolation, lack of education, poverty and discrimination faced by youth with disabilities sets up an interconnected pattern of problems. Millions of these young people end up on the street, unemployed and often involved in crime, sex work and drugs, frequently at the behest of others who see them as easy prey. It is estimated that at least one-third of all street children have a disability.

31. One additional area of particular concern, and potentially of great promise, to youth with disabilities is new information and communications technologies. Computers, mobile phones and tablets allow many youth with disabilities, for the first time, to communicate with the world around them, linking them to social networks and allowing them to access information even if they are unable to leave their room. However, evolving technologies must be designed to be accessible, and youth with disabilities must have the literacy skills and technological training to understand how to use this technology and the resources to be able to purchase and maintain it.

The way forward

32. A holistic approach is needed. There is a need to include youth with disabilities in all mainstream development efforts that target youth. There is also a need for specific and targeted actions and interventions to combat against discrimination, remove barriers and create enabling conditions for their full participation in development and society.

33. While there are an increasing number of programmes that address the specific needs of youth with disabilities, globally the number of such programmes remains small. Organizations run by and for people with disabilities exist in all countries and are a powerful advocacy base for change. But few such organizations have organized systems of youth groups or internship or training programmes whereby young people with disabilities are systematically brought into the organization to represent the voice and concerns of youth with disabilities or are trained to begin to assume leadership roles in future. More systematic outreach to youth with disabilities would add an important and currently poorly represented component to effective disability advocacy efforts, and such efforts must be fostered and funded.

Listen to youth with disabilities

34. Effectively addressing the concerns of youth with disabilities requires listening to the voice of youth with disabilities and proactively involving them in development, including relevant policy and decision-making processes.[5]

35. In 2013, the Division of Social Policy and Development of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs undertook a consultation with the Leonard Cheshire Disability Young Voices Programme. The Programme brings together over 1,200 youth with disabilities to campaign both nationally and internationally for disability rights, and the consultation involved a survey conducted among young disability advocates, aged 16 to 25, from countries around the world.[6] The 75 young adults who took part in the consultation reflected the global Young Voices membership, a balanced number of young men and women with a range of disabilities. These young people responded with their ideas, stories, photographs and comments and raised many issues and concerns. Their call for action focused on a series of key requests:

(a) Treat young people with disabilities equally and with respect: disability is not inability;

(b) Raise awareness among youth and society as a whole about the rights of youth with disabilities and open up opportunities for their participation;

(c) Remove environmental barriers that stop youth with disabilities from participating;

(d) Acknowledge the greater risk of abuse and violence against girls and young women with disabilities. Raise awareness around their vulnerability, reinforce laws to protect them, and provide support to empower them to speak out for themselves;

(e) Reach out to the hardest to reach, ensure education for all covers young people with disabilities, giving them a chance to reach their potential especially through support to schools and families to accept the value of education for children and youth with disabilities;

(f) Ensure equal opportunity and support youth with disabilities to participate in policy and decision-making forums and processes at all levels;

(g) Create opportunities for youth to take part in sports and other recreational activities, with a view to challenging negative stereotypes and promoting social integration;

(h) Support the development and promotion of accessible technologies that facilitate the participation of young people with disabilities;

---

[5] The seventh annual Children's Summit in Rwanda, held in Kigali in 2012, was a good example of involving youth with disabilities in national economic development policy consultations. Children and youth with disabilities represented 20 per cent of the more than 500 delegates at the Summit, which included national parliamentarians and Government officials including the Prime Minister, Pierre Habumuremyi. Recommendations from the Summit were included in Rwanda's first Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy and in the action plan of the Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion.

[6] More details are available from http://undesadspd.org/Youth/ResourcesandPublications/YouthWithDisabilities.aspx.

(i) Promote disability-inclusive international development. All development policy frameworks and programmes should include a disability perspective and address the rights and concerns of persons with disabilities, including through taking proactive measures;

(j) Celebrate diversity. Recognize the important role young people with disabilities play in creating richer, more dynamic, resourceful and respectful communities.

36. The recommendations could provide an important starting point to ensure that youth with disabilities are included in all efforts of development to improve the lives of people worldwide. Above all, unless millions of youth with disabilities are included in all development efforts up to and including the emerging post-2015 development goals, the rights delineated in the Convention are unlikely to be fully realized and the economic and social benefits sought for all through the Millennium Development Goals and all other internationally agreed development goals could not be met.

Questions for consideration

37. The following questions are presented for the consideration of the panel:

(a) What examples exist at the national and local levels with regards to the implementation of practical actions to ensure the rights and needs of youth with disabilities are included in policy and practices on the ground?

(b) What concrete policies and actions proved to be successful and could be replicable by Governments to realize universal education for children and youth with disabilities since they have been known as the hardest to reach in the national efforts for achieving universal education?

(c) Which policies work in terms of effective promotion of employment for youth with disabilities?

(d) Are there any good practices in proactively involving youth with disabilities in development policymaking forums and processes?